In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of ~~using~~ making a computerized ~~virtual business model~~ system ~~to transact~~ for transacting business for a product, comprising:

providing a virtual manufacturer alliance, a virtual distributor alliance, and a plurality of virtual flows, the virtual manufacturer alliance comprising a plurality of manufacturer alliance members, every member of said ~~manufacturer~~ virtual manufacturer alliance having a computer that is programmed to interact with ~~other components of the virtual business model~~ computers of the virtual distributor alliance and virtual flows, all members of said virtual manufacturer alliance being configured to perform a same type of operations associated with manufacturing said product;

~~providing a~~ wherein the virtual distributor alliance ~~comprising~~ comprises a plurality of virtual distributor alliance members, every virtual distributor alliance member having a computer that is programmed to interact with ~~other components of the virtual business model~~ computers of the virtual manufacturer alliance and virtual flows, all members of said distributor alliance being configured to perform a same type of operations as each other associated with distribution of the manufactured product and being configured to not perform different types of operations from each other;

~~providing a~~ wherein the plurality of virtual flows for enabling electronic communication between the computers of the virtual manufacturer and distributor alliances for use in the manufacture and distribution of the product, each of the virtual flows having a computer that is programmed to communicate with the computers of the manufacturer and distributor virtual alliances at each stage of the manufacture and distribution of the product, the computers of the virtual flows managing a flow of information along the virtual flows between alliance members;

providing a contracting business, the contracting business having a computer that is programmed to interact with the computers of the virtual manufacturer and distributor alliances for coordinating operations of the virtual

manufacturer and distributor alliances to enable the contracting business to establish, via the virtual flows, control over the manufacture and distribution of the product by the plurality of virtual manufacturer and distributor alliances.

2.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a virtual material alliance comprising at least one virtual material alliance member, every virtual material alliance member having a computer that is programmed to interact with ~~other components of the virtual business model~~ computers of the virtual manufacturer alliance, virtual distributor alliance, and virtual flows, all members of said virtual material alliance being configured to perform a same type of operations associated with supplying materials to manufacturer alliance members to be used by the manufacturer alliance members to manufacture said product.

3.   Cancelled

4.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein each virtual distributor alliance member corresponds to providing a virtual warehouse.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing a material and product flow.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing an information flow.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing a financial flow.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the using the contracting business includes establishing configurable control points in the information flow for facilitating communications by the contracting business.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 6, further including establishing virtual regional hubs on the information flow for coordinating the manufacture and distribution of the product for customers in particular geographic locations.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing financial and information flows, and further including using the financial flow integrated with the information flow to automatically trigger financial transactions relating to the manufacture and distribution of the product.

11.   (Currently amended) A ~~virtual business model~~ system to transact business for a product, comprising:

a virtual manufacturer alliance, a virtual distributor alliance, and a plurality of virtual flows, the virtual manufacturer alliance comprising a plurality of virtual manufacturer alliance members, every virtual manufacturer alliance member having a computer that is programmed to interact with ~~other components of the virtual business model~~ computers of the virtual distributor alliance and virtual flows, all members of said manufacturer alliance being configured to perform a same type of operations as each other associated with manufacturing said product and being configured to not perform different types of operations from each other;

a wherein the virtual distributor alliance ~~comprising~~ comprises a plurality of virtual distributor alliance members, every virtual distributor alliance member having a computer that is programmed to interact with ~~other components of the virtual business model~~ computers of the virtual manufacturer alliance and virtual flows, all members of said virtual distributor alliance being configured to perform a same type of operations associated with distribution of the manufactured product;

~~a plurality of~~ wherein the virtual flows ~~for enabling~~ enable electronic communication between the computers of the plurality of virtual manufacturer and distributor alliances for use in the manufacture and distribution of the

product, each of the virtual flows having a computer that is programmed to communicate with the computers of the virtual <u>manufacturer and distributor</u> alliances at each stage of the manufacture and distribution of the product, the computers of the virtual flows managing a flow of information along the virtual flows between alliance members; and

a contracting business having a computer that is programmed to interact with the computers of the virtual <u>manufacturer and distributor</u> alliances for coordinating operations of the virtual <u>manufacturer and distributor</u> alliances, wherein the contracting business establishes, via the virtual flows, control over the manufacture and distribution of the product by the plurality of virtual <u>manufacturer and distributor</u> alliances.

12.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ <u>system</u> of claim 11, further comprising:

a virtual material alliance comprising at least one virtual material alliance member, every virtual material alliance member having a computer that is programmed to interact with ~~other components of the virtual business model~~ <u>computers of the virtual manufacturer alliance, virtual distributor alliance, and virtual flows</u>, all members of said virtual material alliance being configured to perform a same type of operations associated with supplying materials to manufacturer alliance members to be used by the manufacturer alliance members to manufacture said product.

13.   Cancelled

14.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ <u>system</u> of claim 11, wherein each virtual distributor alliance member corresponds to a virtual warehouse.

15.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ <u>system</u> of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes a material and product flow.

16.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ system of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes an information flow.

17.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ system of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes a financial flow.

18.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ system of claim 11, further including configurable control points in the information flow for facilitating communications by the contracting business.

19.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ system of claim 16, further including virtual regional hubs on the information flow for coordinating the manufacture and distribution of the product for customers in particular geographic locations.

20.   (Currently amended)   The ~~virtual business model~~ system of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes financial and information flows, and wherein financial transactions are performed the computers of the virtual flows upon being automatically triggered by the financial flow, integrated with the information flow, and relating to the manufacture and distribution of the product.